

Daily Eagle

CAVALRY SERVICE.

DISCUSSION OF THE MERITS OF GOVERNMENT HORSES.

Hardships of the Service on the Western Plains—Selection of Gallant Steeds for Uncle Sam—Rigorous Examination—The Last Test—Good Memory.

A few days ago a reporter engaged in conversation with a recruiting sergeant in the United States cavalry service, and in the course of the chat the officer drifted into the discussion of the merits of horses supplied to the service and the manner in which they are furnished to the government. Not long since 500 horses were purchased in this city, St. Louis, Chicago and other large mercantile centres for troops in the four big western departments of the Platte, Dakota, Missouri and Texas, in which divisions it is estimated that three-fourths of the army of our country is comprised.

"Most of our cavalry horses," said the recruiting sergeant, "are lost on the plains in the west. No one here can conceive the rigor of our western military duties or the hardships they entail for the soldiers and their beasts. We suppose that the great west is teeming with verdure and forage, whereas the fact is that in very many tracts of country scouting parties are compelled to ride for a week or more, at the rate of perhaps fifty miles a day, with no grain for their horses and very little grass by the way. A general scrutiny of the condemned army horses would show that their retirement from the service is due more to starvation than anything else. Very often the troops' horse drops in the ranks from sheer exhaustion and others are so badly used up that they never recover from the privation and fatigue, and are finally condemned for use in the field and shipped to recruiting stations, where they answer much better even than green horses for drilling recruits."

PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS DEMANDED. "What are the physical qualifications demanded for the selection of horses for the cavalry service?"

"Well, in the first place, none but geldings are taken. The government does not care for stallions or mares. The animal submitted for purchase should stand at least fifteen hands high and weigh about 900 pounds. He should be short in the back and also short in the pastern joints. A long-legged beast with a badly-shaped head wouldn't pass muster at all. Low withers is one of the most essential points, because a horse with high withers is liable to work the saddle forward and get sore; and once in that condition he loses flesh and becomes worthless. In addition to these specifications, he must be absolutely free from contracted hoofs, or he won't pass the inspection of the board."

"In what manner are horses secured for the cavalry service?"

"Generally by advertising. The particular class of animals desired is becoming scarcer every day. This, I suppose, is due to the fact that breeders are giving their attention to the raising of draught horses of the Percheron, Norman and similar stock, which are, of course, too slow for cavalry purposes. It is a singular fact that horse dealers, as a rule, consider the government lighter on the prey for all sorts of imposture. For instance, at the last inspection, only eight out of sixty horses offered were accepted. Hostlers trotted them out for inspection full of confidence that they could unload their employers' full stock of useless equines. Some of the animals' manes and forelocks were plaited and decorated with strips of red flannel. Their tails were done up in common logging of so bulky a shape as to suggest the probability of their being about ten feet long. Of course, these decorations had to come off to make sure that the tails were all there, and that the manes were of hair instead of calico. The eyes of a horse under inspection are closely examined.

A RIGOROUS EXAMINATION. "If he, in general outline, is regarded as worthy of consideration at all, he is submitted to a rigorous examination—which takes up about a quarter of an hour—all over him from his teeth to his fetlocks and hoofs. Then the hostler is directed to walk the animal up and down the length of the yard and afterwards to run him as fast as the beast can go. If his action is easy he is ordered 'led in' for the final inspection.

"The last test is a run up hill for a distance of 200 yards or so, to see if his wind is good. No saddle is used. The hostler simply mounts and trots to the starting point, riding backwards as a liberal application of corral to his beast can carry him. If the horse passes this muster he is purchased and led to the blacksmith shop to be branded. His first decoration is a big U. S. on the left shoulder. When he is detailed to a regiment he is branded again with the regimental brand and with the brand of his company on the left hip. For more perfect identification he receives an additional marking on the hoof and is then ready for business. I know of nothing more painful than the branding of a beast, and I think he knows of nothing more painful himself. The brands become obscure in a few years and are necessarily renewed. It is a peculiar fact that when the time comes for renewing the operation nine out of ten animals remember the previous dose, and it is no easy matter to repeat it.—New York Mail and Express.

Tending Long Island Oyster Beds.

Oysters in deep water discharge their spawn early in August, at which time they are poor and unfit to eat. By transferring them to shallow water the sun induces them to ripen in July, and consequently two or three weeks are gained. Land from which oysters have been taken for shipping purposes is now being covered with shells and stones, to which the young animals after hatching will attach themselves. Not until some object is found to which they may cling does the oyster commence to form its shell. Planters are using every effort to keep in subjection the principal enemy of their crop, the star fish. Small steamers with dredges are constantly taking up the oysters, and, after emptying out the stars, spiders, and periwinkles, the cleaned oysters are shovelled overboard on ground where no enemy exists. The stars soon find their way to the new beds, however, and the operation of dredging and emptying has constantly to be repeated.—New York Sun.

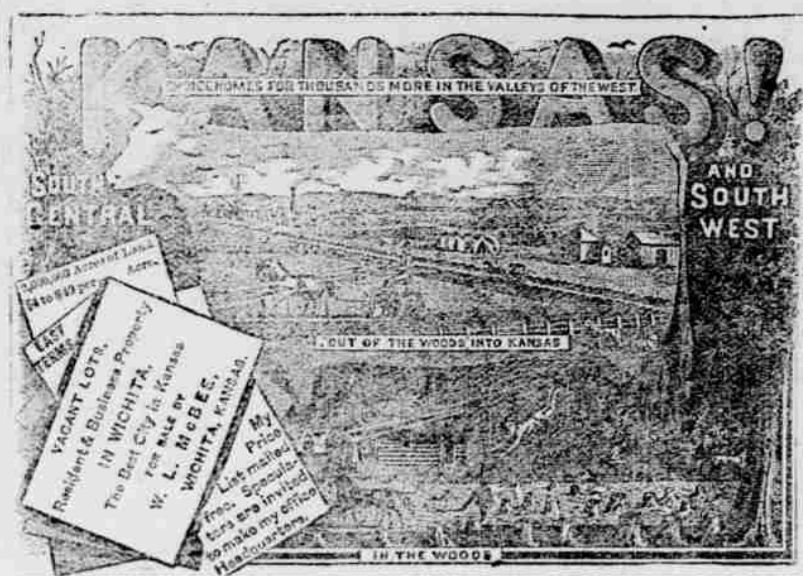
Feenlar Substitute for Common Words. "The Atlanta Constitution claims that the use of the word 'drag' in 'knocked down and drag out,' is peculiar to Georgia. And The Indianapolis Journal adds that when a Hoosier says, 'the coon snuck behind a log,' he has a substitute for the word 'knocked,' known only in Indiana.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Eating Uncooked Vegetable Food.

A community was started at Anaheim, Cal., several years ago, the principal feature of which was that only uncooked vegetable food was to be used, by its members. One after another of the members have left, either by resignation or starvation, and now but two are left.—Chicago Times.

W. L. McBEE,

Sedgwick County Abstractor.



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